HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

HEALTH
22 JUL 1943
G.R.

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REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year ending
DECEMBER 31ST, 1942.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS:

Medical Officer of Health:

NORMAN MACFADYEN, M.B., D.P.H., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

123, Norton Way, Letchworth.
(Phone: Letchworth 12)

Sanitary Inspectors:

SAMUEL T. GUNNING, Cert. S.I.E.B., F.S.I.A.
KENNETH F. HUDSON, Cert. S.I.E.J.B., M.S.I.A. (Until September 1942)
JOHN M. BLADON, Cert. S.I.E.J.B., M.S.I.A., M.R.S.I.
(Appointed December 1942)
21, Bancroft, Hitchin.
(Phone: Hitchin 811-2)

Council Offices:
9, Bancroft, Hitchin.

A.E. PASSINGHAM, Clerk to the Council.
(Phone: Hitchin 406).

HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH for the year ending December 31ST, 1942.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is my pleasant duty to submit my twenty-eighth Annual Report which covers the period 1st January to December 31st, 1942. As in previous war years, this is a condensed summary of conditions affecting the health of the district and has been drawn up in accordance with Circular No. 2604, dated 24th March, 1942, from the Ministry of Health, which again places a restriction on some of the particulars it has been usual to publish, and while particulars of population are again in this report, it is requested that they should not be given publicity in the press.

Section A.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the District.

Area (in acres)	82,559.
Residential Population. (Registrar General's Figure).. ...	22,080.
Number of inhabited houses.	6,537.
Rateable value.	£100,619.
Sum represented by a penny rate.. ...	£ 398.4.1d.
Number of parishes in district... ...	34.

The Registrar General's figure shows a decrease on that of last year, which possibly reflects on the war-time movement of the population.

Vital Statistics.

Births.

Legitimate - Male, 161; Female, 178) Total, 353.
Illegitimate- Male, 8; Female, 6) Birth-rate, 15·9.

Deaths.

Male, 116; Female, 122. Total, 238. Death-rate, 10·7.

Deaths of Infants under one year.

Legitimate - Male, 4; Female, 4) Total:
Illegitimate- Male, 0; Female, 0) 8.

Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 births) = 22·6.

Still Births.

Legitimate - Male, 5; Female, 3)
Illegitimate- Male, 0; Female, 0)
Still Birth-rate, ·03.

These are good figures and indicate a survival rate. If maintained, they are sufficient for a stationary population but still an ageing one.

The chief causes of death were as follows:-

Tuberculosis	10.
Diphtheria	1.
Influenza	1.
Malignant disease	32.
Diabetes.	6.
Circulatory disease	93.
Respiratory disease	28
Infant diarrhoea	1.
Prematurity and infant deaths. and other diseases.	8.

There were no deaths from measles, whooping cough, or connected with child-birth.

Infectious Diseases.

The following cases were notified:-

Chickenpox.	25.
Diphtheria.	3.
Erysipelas.	1.
Measles.	19.
Meningitis.	2.
Pemphigus.	1.
Pneumonia.	4.
Puerperal Pyrexia.	3.
Scarlet Fever...	20.
Tuberculosis	26.
Whooping Cough..	21.
Total.	125.

The rise and fall of Infectious Diseases over a period of 4 years, is shown as follows:-

1939.... 85. (Excluding Measles.
1940....312.
1941....512.
1942....125.

The Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria cases were treated at the North Herts. Isolation Hospital, which with the annexe at South Lodge, Baldock, is managed by the North Herts. Joint Hospital Board.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

This has been actively carried on throughout the district. The Nurses have been a great help in this work. In some of the villages the figure of immunised children has approached 100% and over the whole district it is over 70%. Head Teachers have co-operated well. Wherever there are school or Infant Welfare Clinics, they have been used. The keeping up of this work is, of course, very important and regular attendance at the Clinics is a great help.

School Inspection.

This has shown that the general health has been improved and an active campaign against malnutrition, scabies and other infestations, has given good results.

The dinners which are now provided so generally in the villages, are a great boon in several ways and the workers in this sphere are doing a real public service.

Section B.

General Provision of Health Services.

1. Public Health Officials:

(a) Medical.

The Medical Officer of Health is a part-time Officer holding a Diploma in Public Health. He is also Medical Officer of Health for Hitchin Urban and Royston Urban Districts; is Assistant School Medical Officer for the County and Medical Superintendent of the Isolation Hospital.

(b) Sanitary.

The Senior Sanitary Inspector holds the Certificate of the Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Board (London) 1920, including the qualification as an Inspector of Meat and other Foods.

The Additional Sanitary Inspector holds the Certificate of the Sanitary Inspectors' Examination (Joint) Board and also the Certificate of the R.S.I. as an Inspector of Meat and other Foods.

In September of the year under review, Mr. K.F. Hudson obtained an appointment at Marlborough in Wiltshire and Mr. J.M. Bladon of Rugby Rural District, was appointed in December as Additional Sanitary Inspector. He took up his duties on January 8th, 1943.

(c) Clerical. - Miss M.D.E. Sayer.

Laboratory facilities, Hospital facilities, etc.

There are no changes or developments in these services to record during the year. The position therefore remains as stated in my previous report.

Section C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Water Supplies.

The district is well supplied with water, 31 of the 34 parishes having a piped supply; Hexton, Caldecote and Radwell representing the three exceptions.

There is no material alteration in the sources of supply to that outlined in my previous report.

I still feel much concerned owing to the unsatisfactory nature of the water supply in the village of Hexton, and keen disappointment is felt that approval has not been obtained to the extension of the main from Lilley, to give a pure water supply to this village.

Examination of Supplies.

Regular routine sampling of water supplies has continued throughout the year under review, with the following results:-

(4) samples were taken and submitted for full Bacteriological and Chemical Examination.

(32) samples taken and submitted for Bacteriological Examination only.

Of these, 35 were entirely satisfactory.

Sewage and Sewage Disposal.

Having in mind the Council's pre-war proposals in regard to the improvement of sewage disposal conditions in the district, consequent on reports of inadequate provisions then in existence, it is at least some consolation to know that by constant attention by the Surveyor and his staff, it has been possible to deal with some measure of satisfaction, with the continually increasing volume of sewage, and by close co-operation with the military authorities, the difficulties arising from camp sanitation, have been overcome.

Refuse Collection and Disposal; and Salvage.

Again this service has been carried out with efficiency and success. A perusal of the reports submitted to the Refuse Collection and Salvage Committees are, to say the least, interesting and provide evidence of the volume of work undertaken.

Brief figures for a complete year's working which show 323 tons of salvage disposed of, to the value of £1,594, with a net profit of £500, reflects no little credit on the Salvage Officer and his staff. The regularity of the collections too, is appreciated throughout the district.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

If the number of inspections, as submitted in the following table, show a reduction on last year's figures, it is only a reflection of the fact that the Senior Sanitary Inspector was working single-handed between the departure of Mr. Hudson from the beginning of September, to the end of the year under review. I am, however, satisfied from personal observations, that this branch of the work is receiving constant and careful attention and it is a fact that a considerably increased amount of work is necessary to produce a smaller proportion of results than in ordinary times, by reason of labour difficulty, shortage of material, etc., and I am convinced that no amount of trouble or time has been spared in an endeavour to obtain the greatest volume of work possible.

The figures supplied are as follows:-

Total number of inspections for all purposes - 2,742.

Divided as follows:-

For defects under the Housing Acts.	206.
For defects under the Factory & Workshop Acts.. ...	42.
For the prevention of Infectious Disease.	159..
As to the Sanitary Condition of Schools & Public Halls.	21.
Inspections under the Milk & Dairies Order.	412.
Inspections of slaughter-houses, butchers shops, etc.	151.
For the prevention of Nuisances.	368.
Inspections of drainage, conversions, etc.	198.
Inspections of water supplies and sampling.	118.
Supervision of Refuse Collection and Disposal.. ...	382.
Supervision of Salvage.	361.
Inspections re Rats and Mice Destruction.	60.
Inspections under Shops Act, 1934..	21.
Unclassified (A.R.P., Food Decontamination, etc). ...	243.

Section D.

Housing.

This all important subject again loomed into prominence at the closing months of the year under review, when information was called for as to the possible need of post-war housing accommodation for the district.

From records available at the Office and from the undisputed knowledge of the housing conditions in the district, gathered by your Senior Sanitary Inspector during his long association with the district, a table was prepared including a list of houses in the district which it was considered should be the subject of action under the Housing Acts at the earliest possible moment. As can only be expected, the provision of new housing accommodation in the district for the year in question, fell to an unprecedented low level. Only 2 private dwelling houses were erected or completed during the year and all by private enterprise. The increasing shortage of accommodation is now being very clearly reflected in the increased amount of work necessary to maintain existing accommodation (some of which would otherwise have been condemned) in a condition reasonably fit for war-time occupation.

The following Sanitary Improvements were undertaken in existing dwelling houses:-

Re-drainage.	22.
Sanitary Improvements, including drainage.	17.
Other work for the abatement of nuisances (by informal action..	36.

Three Abatement Notices were outstanding at December 31st, 1942.

No applications were received for Grants under the Housing (Rural Workers) Act.

Section E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk Supply.

I think it is safe to say that never in the history of Public Health, has the importance of Milk Supply been so stressed

as during this war period. Both in matters of quality, as well as quantity, Government propaganda has ever kept this vital food in prominence, the sole aim being to ensure that Milk of the highest standard of purity, in the largest volume possible, shall reach the consumer.

An experimental work in connection with the National Milk Advisory Scheme, commenced in the district during the year under review, and some useful results have been tabulated. A further change which was taken place in regard to the greater part of our district is, that your Sanitary Inspector now acts for the County Council in the matter of sampling Designated Milks.

There are now 158 Registered Producers or Producer-Retailers, 36 of which are licenced for the production of Accredited Milk, and 13 for the production of Tuberculin Tested Milk. There are also 22 who are registered to carry on the trade of Retail Purveyors only within the district.

Meat and other Foods.

By reason of war conditions, the licenced slaughter-houses in the district are not in regular use. Occasional slaughterings, licenced by the Food Control Committee, are carried on at these premises, whereby the 16 slaughter houses are maintained up to the standard.

An increasing number of inspections are now made by your two Sanitary Inspectors in connection with reserve food supplies which have now to be examined from time to time, with a view to maintaining such reserve in a wholesome condition. Further, all foods suspected to be unfit for human consumption in shops, store or depot, have to be certified by your Inspectors before replacements can be made.

Bakehouses and other food stores, including vans for the delivery of foods in the villages, are inspected on every available occasion, and where necessary, defects are pointed out by the service of an informal notice which is invariably sufficient for the purpose.

Tuberculosis Regulations.

Table of New Cases and Mortality for the year.

Age Periods.	New Cases. Respiratory.		New Cases. Non-Respiratory.		Deaths. Respiratory.		Deaths. Non-Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0- 1.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1- 5.	-	1	3	-	-	-	1	-
5-15.	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-
15-25.	1	3	1	2	2	2	-	-
25-35.	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
35-45.	2	3	-	-	1	-	-	-
45-55.	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
55-65. and over.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals.	8	9	6	3	4	2	2	-

From the above it will be noted that 26 new Cases of Tuberculosis were reported during the year, one of these representing a transfer from an evacuable area. The number notified for the previous year was 21. I am glad to be able to state that 3 patients suffering from Tuberculosis were reported cured.

Conclusion.

War conditions explain the non-progressive character of this report and the diminished amount of constructive work carried out. It is, nevertheless, true that the energies of the Council during this strenuous period will have been put to good account if the stage is set to get on with the necessary improvements as soon as National affairsmake it possible.

Meanwhile, I would again express my sincere appreciation of the goodwill and co-operation extended to me by members of the Council, the Clerk, Surveyor - and in particular, to the Senior Sanitary Inspector, who has at all times been "at the ready", whether the duties have been routine, special, or of an emergency nature - and their respective staffs, in all matters affecting the welfare of the residents in the Rural District of Hitchin.

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) NORMAN MACFADYEN.

Medical Officer of Health.

29.6.43.